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THE OPENING OF A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN ON ORAL HYGIENE.

A national campaign on oral hygiene was opened in Cleveland, Ohio, March 18, 1910, under the auspices of a committee of the National Dental Association, and at the instance of President Taft Passed Asst. Surg. C. W. Wille, of the Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service, was detailed to attend the meeting in a representative capacity. In an address Doctor Wille expressed the interest of the President in the objects of the movement and commended those responsible for its inauguration.

In his report of the objects and methods of the campaign he states in part as follows:

The efforts of the committee on oral hygiene of the National Dental Association to secure the appointment of district dental inspectors and to provide for widespread dental education on oral hygiene in the public schools of the country had their inception in 1898. Because of a lack of proper appreciation of the importance of the subject on the part of the various dental and medical societies, boards of health and education, the movement lagged, and it was not until two or three years later that a few pages on the physiology of the teeth were inserted in some of the text-books on this subject.

Russia was the pioneer in this movement, having established a system of inspection of the teeth of the children in the public schools as early as 1879. Since then Germany, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Italy, Japan, and New South Wales have instituted similar inspection.

In this country the State of Massachusetts has taken cognizance of the importance of this work, so that at present popular lectures on dental hygiene and prophylaxis are permitted in some of the public schools under the supervision of the respective boards of public education. At this time the city of New York maintains clinics for the care of the teeth of the children of the indigent poor. The city of Rochester maintains one clinic. Some of the cities of New Jersey, Indiana, Illinois, Mississippi, Iowa, Minnesota, Georgia, and Washington have instituted dental examinations to date.

At the convention of the National Dental Association held two years ago one session was devoted to the subject of oral hygiene, at which, on account of the enthusiasm of its delegation, the city of Cleveland was selected as the headquarters of the national committee

on oral hygiene. By persistent effort this committee obtained a hearing before the Cleveland board of education, as a result of which permission was granted to make dental examinations in 4 of its public schools.

This examination of 2,677 pupils was conducted by members of the local dental society under the supervision of the chairman of the committee on oral hygiene of the National Dental Association, disclosing the fact that 97 per cent of the children gave evidences of dental and oral diseases. These statistics were incorporated in a petition to the board of education, the national, state, and local associations participating, their report concluding with the following recommendations:

- (1) Requesting permission to place one dental inspector in each school.
- (2) To permit the establishment of 4 centrally located dispensaries for treating the teeth of the children of the indigent poor.
- (3) To permit the placing of one clinic in the Marion School, where pupils could receive proper dental attention, where careful records would be kept to demonstrate increased working efficiency of the children as well as a diminished tendency to contract infectious and contagious disease.
- (4) To establish practical and illustrated talks to parents, teachers, and scholars on subjects pertaining to dental hygiene in the assembly rooms of the schools.
- (5) These services to be rendered by members of the local dental society, free of charge, to demonstrate existing conditions, a reduction of the incidence of disease, increased working efficiency of the scholars, and to secure data with which to demonstrate to the State and public at large that such combination of inspection, treatment, and lectures had proven of value.

Upon the receipt of this petition the board of public education of the city adopted a resolution permitting the establishment of this system of inspection, treatment, and lectures in 4 schools for the period of one year, as above outlined, all arrangements to be carried out through the director of schools, aided by the social center committee, the results of the work to be filed with the board by January 1, 1911.

The report of this resolution was received by the committee of four, representing the national, state, and local committees on oral hygiene and the committee on education and hygiene of the local dental society, and at its request 18 members of the Cleveland dental society, including its executive council, were appointed to act in conjunction with it in formulating plans to carry on the work in that city. These plans provided for the following:

- (1) Examinations of 56,000 pupils.
- (2) Maintenance of 4 clinics in public schools for thirty weeks of five days each.
- (3) The establishment of lecture courses on dental hygiene.
- (4) The equipment of the dispensaries to be furnished by the national and state societies.
- (5) The professional services, or funds in lieu thereof, to be furnished by the Cleveland dental society.

These plans received the indorsement of the committee of 22 and were recommended to the Cleveland dental society for adoption.

Following the adoption of this schedule as outlined, the large committee of 22 resolved itself into 3 subcommittees, each to consider separately the subjects of dental examinations, clinics, and education and lectures, and to formulate plans as to the best methods wherewith these examinations, clinics, and lectures might be carried on. The committee on examinations prepared the necessary record forms, requests for examinations, and records of examinations. The committee on clinics formulated the rules for the proper conduct of the dispensaries.

The committee on lectures made recommendations as to the scope and character of the popular talks on the following subjects:

- (1) The anatomy and physiology of the teeth.
- (2) The care of the teeth and oral cavity from the prophylactic standpoint.
- (3) The care of diseased teeth and oral conditions.

It was decided that papers upon these topics were to be prepared individually by the members of 4 corps of 5 men each, these papers to be compared and rewritten into a uniform talk upon each subject. The lectures were to be so arranged as to cover the entire public-school system of the city.

Upon recommendation of the committee on education and hygiene of the Cleveland dental society these plans of the larger committee were adopted by the local society. With the adoption of these plans, and having had the consent of the board of public education to institute the proposed system of dental inspection, clinics, and lectures in the public schools, it was only necessary to arrange details and purchase the necessary equipment before the system might become operative.

Under the auspices of the national association it is intended to pursue a course similar to that detailed above in carrying this campaign into the various cities and States of the Union, the purpose of the campaign being to bring the importance of this subject fully and frankly before parents, educators, social workers, and philanthropists to invite the public to an open discussion on oral hygiene and to determine how best to further the popular movement for the better care of the mouth and teeth.

The opening of the campaign on oral hygiene at Cleveland, Ohio, March 18, 1910, under the auspices of the National Dental Association, the Ohio state dental society, and the Cleveland dental society began with the dedication and formal opening of the dental clinics in connection with 4 of the public schools and 2 parochial schools. Dedication addresses were made in each school by members of the national dental association and were replied to by members of the Cleveland dental society accepting the equipment of these clinics at the hands of the national association.

The afternoon exercises were held at Gray's armory, Dr. G. C. Ashmund, president of the board of education of Cleveland, presiding. The address of welcome was by Superintendent of Schools W. H. Elson, and was responded to by Richard Grady, dental surgeon, United States Naval Academy, for the national association. Superintendent Elson promised his cooperation in the movement. Doctor Grady predicted that the movement would become of national extent when the public began to realize that good teeth meant good health.

Dr. J. W. Dowd, ex-superintendent of schools of Toledo, Ohio, in an address on "Why we need oral hygiene in the public schools," explained the necessity of keeping the mouth in a sanitary condition to insure good health in the schoolroom. In her address on "The importance of lectures in the school buildings" Mrs. Sarah E. Hyre, chairman of the free lectures and social center work of the board of education, spoke of the necessity for illustrated lectures to accomplish the best results among the foreign element in our public schools.

Dr. W. T. Jackman, of the Ohio State Dental Society, in his address on "The state work" advocated the establishment of dental clinics

in every state institution. Dr. Weston A. Price of the Cleveland dental society, addressing the meeting on "The local work," spoke of the benefits derived from proper oral sanitation and of the results which should follow the efforts of the proposed 20 lecturers on oral topics, who would be selected from the ranks of the Cleveland dental society.

Dr. J. P. Corley of the National Dental Association, addressing the meeting on "Some of the difficulties which we have encountered," stated his belief that the public would readily pay any increase in taxation which the support of the dental clinic in the schools might render necessary when once the benefits to be derived from this attention were made evident to the taxpayer.

The evening meeting was held in the armory, former Governor Myron T. Herrick presiding. In the address of welcome Mayor Herman C. Baehr spoke of his appreciation of the importance of this movement as it related to the welfare of the city, and promised his efforts in an endeavor to secure the appropriation by the city council of sufficient funds to extend the scope of the work. Dr. Burton Lee Thorpe, president of the National Dental Association, responded.

Dr. W. G. Ebersole, chairman of the oral hygiene committee of the National Dental Association, speaking on "The importance of oral hygiene," impressed upon his audience the need of educating the public in the correct use of the mouth and teeth, and explained the system of inspection, dental attendance, and popular lectures which will be followed in Cleveland.

Dr. W. A. Evans, commissioner of health of Chicago, spoke on "The relation of conditions of the oral cavity to the health and morals of school children." He cited statistics covering the incidence of disease in the children of the public schools of Chicago, and explained how readily moral and physical degeneracy might result from decayed and diseased teeth.

Dr. H. C. Brown, representing Governor Harmon addressed the meeting on "The attitude of the State toward public health," declaring that ignorance of true conditions was responsible for the inactivity displayed by legislators respecting this aspect of public health work. My address on "The attitude of the Government toward public health," closed the evening session.

The attendance upon the afternoon and evening meetings numbered 4,000, showing a widespread popular interest in the movement. More than 100 visiting dentists representing many States of the Union attended the opening of this campaign.